

SPC-2010-0061C



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

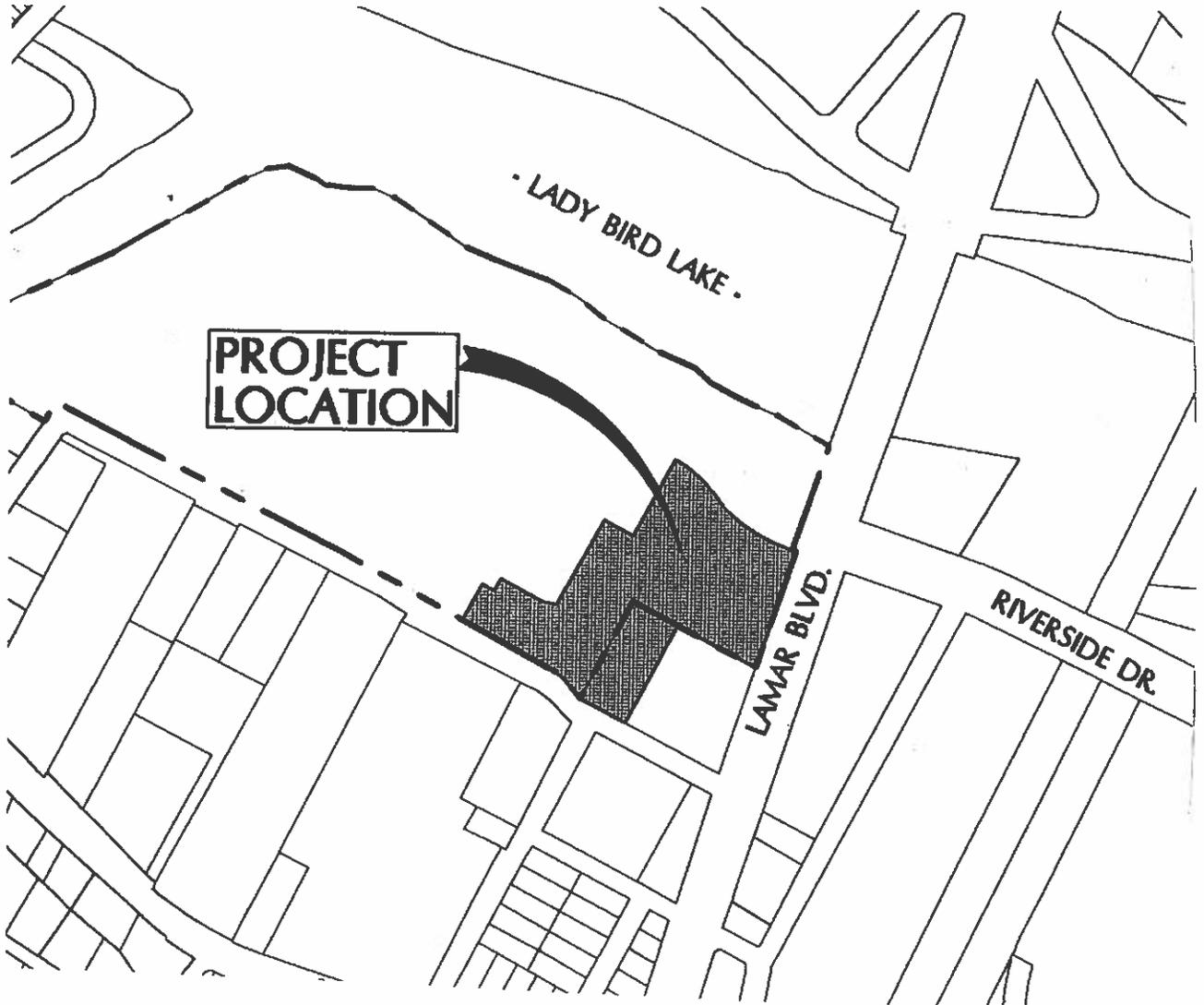
OPERATOR: C.Casillas

CASE#: SPC-2010-0061C
 ADDRESS: 202 S Lamar Blvd
 GRID: H22
 MANAGER: NIKKI HOELTER



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Design Commission

FROM: Nick Naccarato
Redevelopment Project Manager
Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office

A.

Susan Benz
Benz Resource Group

Susan Benz

DATE: May 25, 2010

SUBJECT: ZACH New Theatre

The ZACH Theatre project team respectfully submits the following responses to the May 7, 2010 Design Commission recommendation letter.

The ZACH team believes this civic building on parkland embodies the Shared Values for Urban Areas and the Vision for Urban Places goals stated in the Urban Design Guidelines for Austin. The design team strived for a building orientation and site design that creates a comfortable urban environment by providing shelter from the harsh Texas sun and a reorientation away from fast moving Lamar vehicular traffic to slower pedestrian-oriented spaces.

- *"The Commission recommends that the project build to the property line along Lamar if it can accommodate the double row of trees shown in the plan."*

Response:

The project design team is proposing a double row of Monterrey Oaks along the Lamar Boulevard sidewalk on the east edge of the property to enhance the pedestrian experience. See Exhibits A, B and H. The second row of trees is entirely within the property line. The theatre is positioned as closely as possible against the second row of trees. Moving the theatre closer to the property line would require the removal of the second row of trees.

- *"The Commission recommends that the orientation of the building along Lamar be aligned with the angle of the street."*

Response:

If the theatre were rotated to align the east façade parallel with Lamar Boulevard, more of the southern "service drive" side of the building would be exposed to the view of motorists and pedestrian traffic on Lamar Boulevard.

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The alignment allows for space along the south side of the building for additional landscaping of the staff and actor pedestrian paths and loading area. See Exhibits A and H.

The alignment of the theatre has received support from the City of Austin Office of the Arborist, Parks and Recreation Department and an independent arborist for an acceptable distance from a 21" Live Oak (Tree #576) on the south side of the theatre that is to remain. The alignment also allows for a 9" Big Tooth Maple (Tree #588) at the southwest corner of the theatre and an 8" Spanish Oak (Tree #898) at the northwest corner of the theatre to remain and eases the impact on a 14" Spanish Oak (Tree #900) and a 19" Live Oak (Tree #787), both on the north side of the theatre near the new parking lot.

Additional rotation of the theatre would require the removal of two of the existing trees above and unacceptable encroachment into the critical root zone of the 21" Live Oak.

- *"The Commission recommends that the internal orientation of the theater building address Lamar, or address both Lamar and the internal campus together rather than the campus alone."*

Response:

The design team believes that the theatre design addresses Lamar Boulevard to the east, Lady Bird Lake and its Hike and Bike Trail to the north and the existing ZACH Theatre campus to the west. We recognize that the specific use of the building, particularly sound and light isolation requirements essential to a theatre stage and auditorium, limit opportunities for public entryways and vision glazing; however, we have endeavored to create unique pedestrian experiences along three of the public facades.

The main entrance of the theatre is oriented west towards a new public plaza that is central to the ZACH campus. See exhibits A and C.

The north facade of the theatre faces Lady Bird Lake, downtown and a large landscaped rain garden that acts as a front yard to the theatre. A two story transparent lobby space faces onto the rain garden. The north facade creates the most prominent view of the theatre as one approaches from the Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge or the Lamar Boulevard vehicular bridge. See Exhibit D.

The 70' fly tower, located directly above the stage for scenery to "fly" up into, is the tallest part of the theatre and faces Lamar Boulevard. The fly tower is intentionally oriented such that the thinner dimension of the tower faces Lady Bird Lake, creating an elegant proportion as one approaches the theatre from either the north or south. See Exhibit D.

The mass of the tower on the south, east and north sides is broken up by changes in material and facade recesses. See Exhibits D, F and G.

At street level along Lamar Boulevard, a pleasant pedestrian experience through an allée of trees has been purposefully created. Seating areas between the sidewalk and the theatre are landscaped with low evergreens and plants that provide seasonal color, creating refuge from the vehicular traffic of Lamar Boulevard while maintaining the rhythm of the streetscape. See Exhibit E.

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The pedestrian experience is further activated by a linear marquee that will have changing displays promoting ZACH's performance season. See Exhibit B.

Consideration has been given to the paths that visitors to the theatre and plaza will take, whether approaching by foot, bicycle, public transportation or private vehicle. Visitors approaching from the Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge and the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail will travel a path through the rain garden from the northeast corner of the site to the plaza. Visitors approaching from the bus stop at Toomey Road and Lamar Boulevard to the south will travel a path on the north side of the theatre that is accentuated by a wide connection to the Lamar Boulevard sidewalk, flowering trees and path lighting. Visitors arriving by private vehicle will park either in the new expanded parking lot at the northwest corner of the site or in the existing parking lot to the west of the Whisenhunt Theatre and approach along an existing covered walkway. See Exhibit H.

- *"The Commission recommends that the multi-use of the plaza be explored. Connections between the plaza and public areas outside the ZACH complex should be strengthened and made explicit to allow public use of the open spaces."*

Response:

Both the plaza and the new expanded parking lot will be open to the public when a special event at ZACH is not taking place. It is expected that the plaza will be activated by visitors to the Hike and Bike Trail who can park in the parking lot and exercise or stretch on the plaza. Nearby bicycle racks provide parking for cyclists who want to use the plaza. See Exhibit A.

The plaza will be accessed from the Hike and Bike Trail and Lamar Boulevard by means of lit paths through the rain garden in the northeast quadrant of the site. See Exhibit H.

The plaza has been sized to accommodate the capacity of the theatre (418 patrons) at a seated dinner under a tent. The plaza, as well as the theatre, will be available to rent by the public for special events.

The plaza will accommodate various activities, including:

- Providing a space for children's education programs at ZACH with safe access to the new theatre from existing and future ZACH buildings.
 - Connecting the ZACH buildings into a working campus
 - Providing performance and event space sheltered from the Lamar Boulevard traffic
 - Providing an exercise and stretching space for Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail users.
 - Providing a gathering space for the South Lamar Boulevard pedestrian district.
- *"The Commission recommends that ZACH explore establishing a maintenance agreement with Parks and Recreation for the maintenance of its landscaped areas that does not place an added burden on PARD in perpetuity."*

Response:

The 2004 Lease Between The City of Austin And ZACH Scott Theatre Center requires ZACH to maintain, at its own expense, all facilities and improvements within the lease premises. In February, the project team began the process for a License Agreement with the City of Austin to maintain the right of way landscaping along Lamar Boulevard to ensure consistency in the level of maintenance.

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- *"The Commission requested a presentation of the project well before the Alternative Equivalent Compliance request yet the project was not presented to the Commission until a few weeks after Alternative Equivalent Compliance was approved."*

Response:

The ZACH project team received a request for a presentation from the Design Commission on December 14, 2009, the day of the rescheduled December Design Commission meeting. The ZACH team immediately began preparing for a January 25, 2010 presentation.

The Alternative Equivalent Compliance approval letter was dated and received by the ZACH team on January 19, 2010. The letter was submitted to the Design Commission as additional supporting documentation prior to the January presentation.

- *"The Commission also encourages that the building be moved northward to the building set back line to allow for more landscape buffering between the existing parking lot to the south and the proposed loading drive."*

Response:

The location of the proposed service drive is not dependent on building location, but rather the decision by the project team to protect the 21" Live Oak tree (Tree #576). The minimum 12' wide drive must pass to the south of the tree. To move the drive toward the tree to allow for more landscape buffering would have a greater impact the critical root zone and overhead limbs and could require removal of the 21" Oak Tree. See Exhibit A.

The ZACH team is available to answer questions you might have regarding our responses.

Exhibits Attached:

- A ZACH Site Plan
- B Lamar Pedestrian View
- C West Facade Rendering with Patron Drop-Off Area
- D View of Site from Intersection of Lamar Boulevard and Riverside Drive
- E Lamar Boulevard Seating Areas
- F View of Site From Lamar Boulevard Traveling North
- G East Building Elevation
- H Pedestrian Paths
- I Alternative Equivalent Compliance Approval Letter



City of Austin

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May 27, 2010

City of Austin
Mayor and City Council
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78704

The Parks and Recreation Board had the opportunity to hear the presentation on the proposed new ZACH Theatre at the September 2009 and March 2010 board meetings. The new theatre will create a diverse waterfront experience and improve pedestrian activity within the four (4) acre Zachary Scott Theatre Center campus it presently occupies. The project is being constructed under a public/private development agreement between the City of Austin and ZACH Scott Theatre Center, utilizing 1985 and 2006 bond election funds in addition to funds from ZACH's Capital Campaign.

The proposed development will transform the current one (1) acre of open parkland within the lease line into an active urban space that includes a public plaza open to the public. ZACH will make the plaza available to the public for public or private events that will accommodate 418 seated guests.

Construction is scheduled to start in the Fall of 2010 with completion scheduled for early 2012. The first performance is set for late Summer or Fall of 2012.

The Parks and Recreation Board is supportive of the use of parkland to expand the ZACH Scott Theatre campus as presented and its continued contribution to the arts in Austin.

Respectfully,

Linda H. Guerrero

Linda H. Guerrero, Chair
Parks and Recreation Board

CC: Marc A. Ott, Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager
Sara Hensley, Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department



City of Austin

Founded by Congress, Republic of Texas, 1839
Planning and Development Review Department
One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road
P.O. Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767-8835

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January 19, 2010

Catherine Craig
Andersson Wise Architects
807 Brazos Street, Suite 800
Austin, TX 78701

Re: ZACH Scott Theater – Alternative Equivalent Compliance

Dear Ms. Craig,

The Planning and Development Review Department has reviewed your informal request for Alternative Equivalent Compliance pursuant to Sec. 1.5.3.A of *Subchapter E: Design Standards and Mixed Use* dated January 15, 2009, for the subject property. Your request for an alternative to the following subsection in *Subchapter E* is recommended subject to the following conditions:

- Sec. 2.2.6 to allow the building to have its entrance oriented towards the plaza, as opposed to S. Lamar Blvd.
- Sec. 3.2.2 to allow the building to not meet the required glazing requirements on all building facades.

This alternative is recommended pursuant to Sec. 1.5.4 of *Subchapter E*: because the physical design characteristics unique to the proposed use make strict compliance with the subject standard impracticable. The Design Standards give an exception for Civic Buildings for Sec. 2.2.2(D) – Building Placement in order for community spaces to have creative and usable layout options, and the building's orientation along S. Lamar provides an active Supplemental Zone with shaded seating. The applicant proposes to improve the greenspace located at the corner of Riverside and S. Lamar into a rain garden, as well as a double row of trees along the Core Transit Corridor sidewalk along S. Lamar. The fly tower associated with a theater will serve as a landmark for the building along S. Lamar, and the entryway facing the plaza will encourage a campus feel between the adjacent ZACH Scott buildings. Glazing will be less than *Subchapter E* requires due to the hardship of a theater building's prevention of lighting to penetrate the light-controlled stage area.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 974-2826.

Sincerely,

Sarah Graham
Senior Planner

Exhibit I

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Z **a** **C** **H**
T H E A T R E
ZACHARY SCOTT THEATRE CENTER

ANDERSSON · WISE ARCHITECTS
Theatre Consultants Collaborative, LLC

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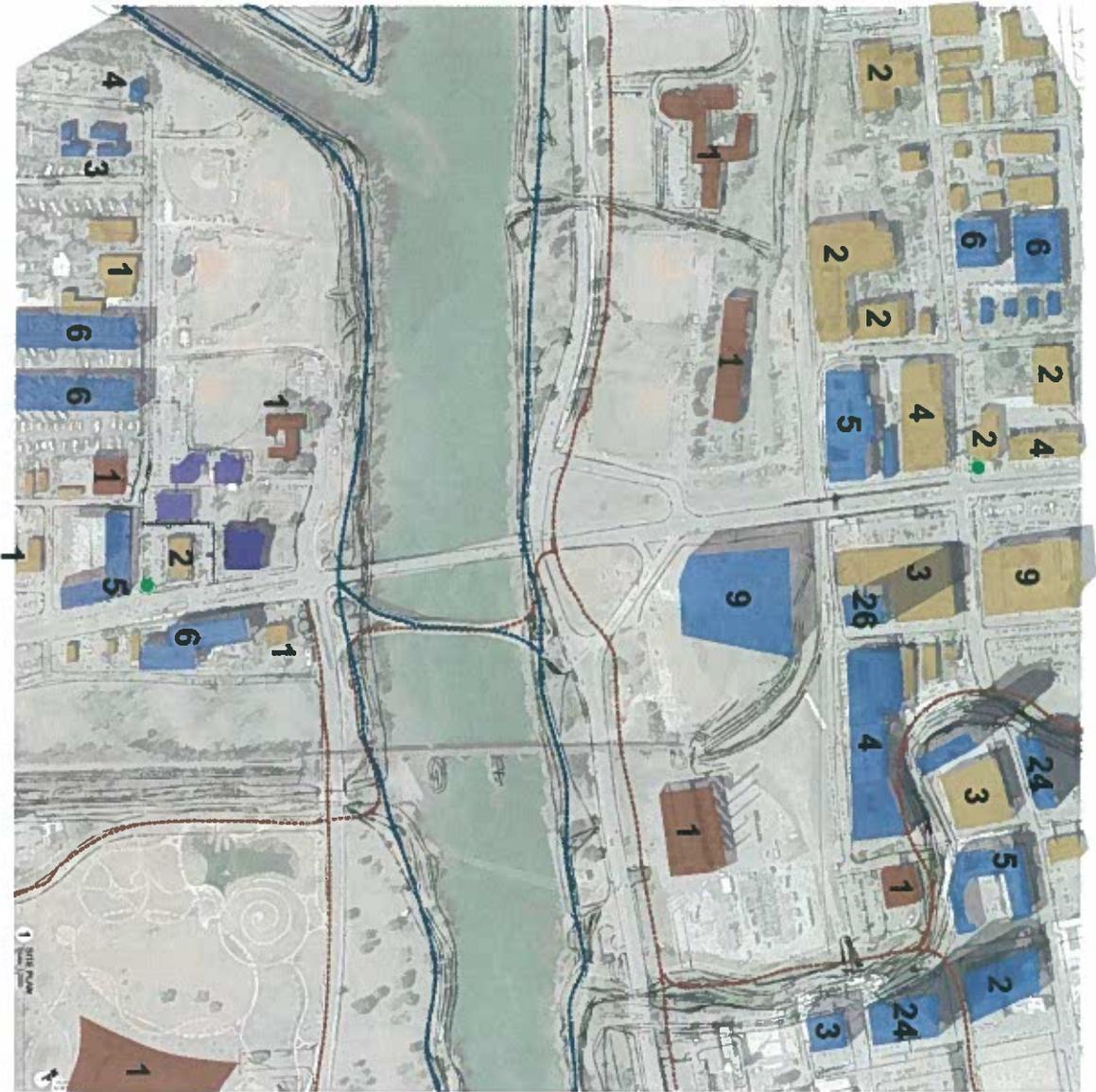


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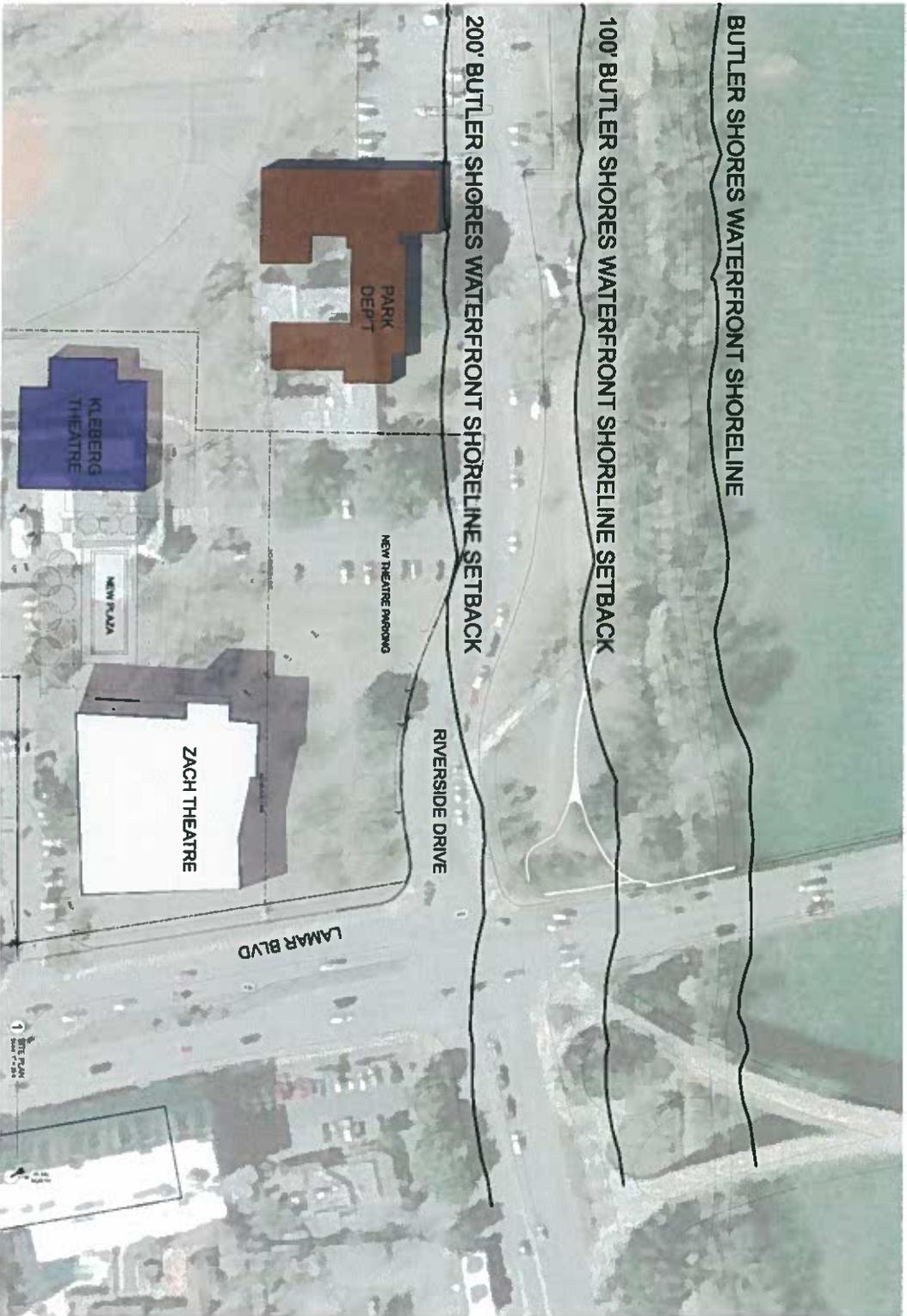
North Elevation

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- BUILDING TYPE LEGEND**
- ZACH COOPER, EX WITH NEW THEATER
 - RESIDENTIAL
 - COMMERCIAL
 - CITY OF AUSTIN / CIVIC BLDG
- NUMBER OF FLOORS LISTED INSIDE BUILDING ENVELOPE**
- PUBLIC ACCESS LEGEND**
- BIKE PATH
 - MULTI-USE CORRIDOR (HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL)
 - BUS STOP
- ROUTES TAKEN FROM CITY OF AUSTIN 2009 BICYCLE PLAN**

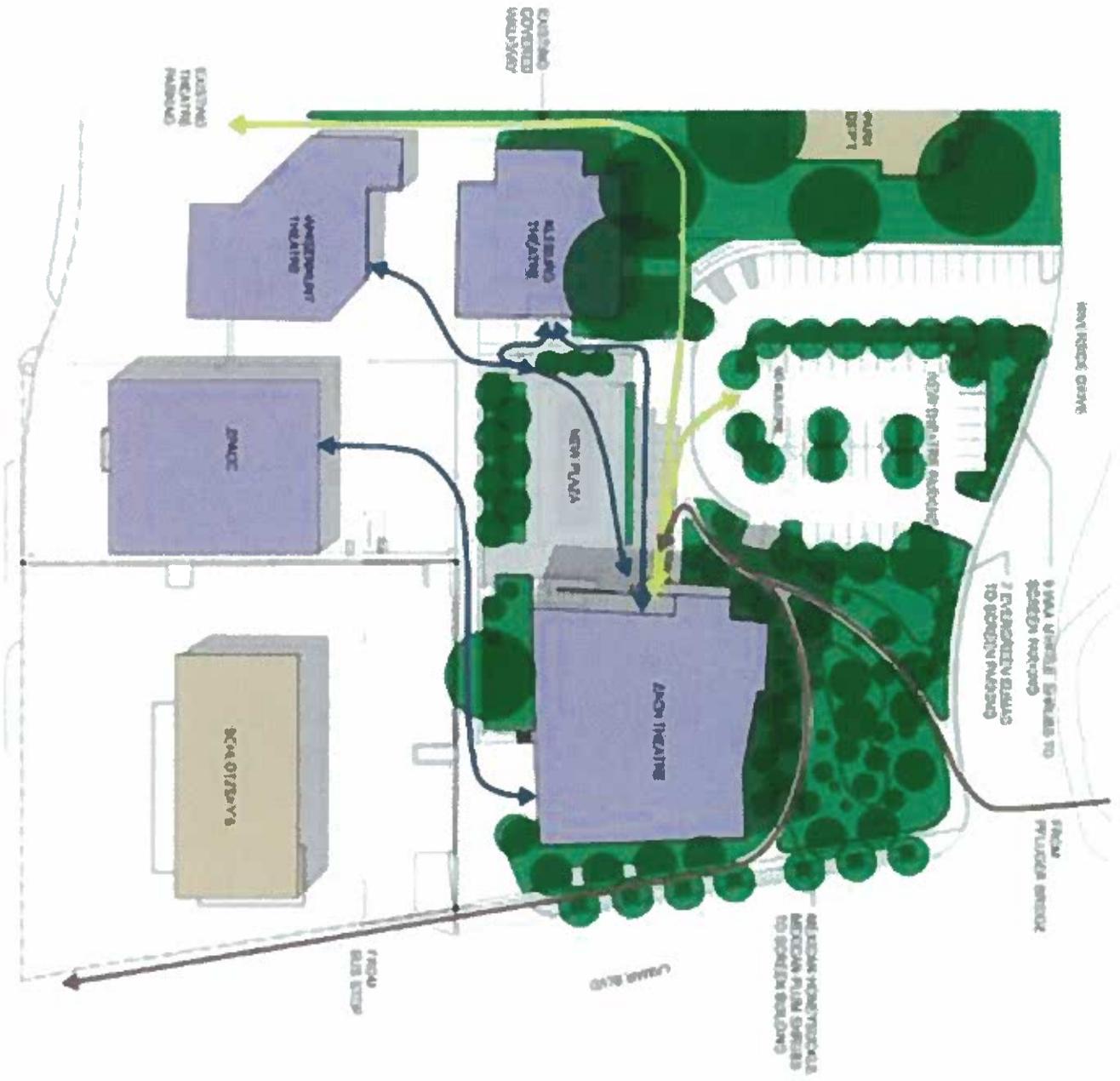


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- EXISTING TREATING FACILITY
- NEW TREATING FACILITY
- EXISTING TREATING FACILITY
- EXISTING TREATING FACILITY



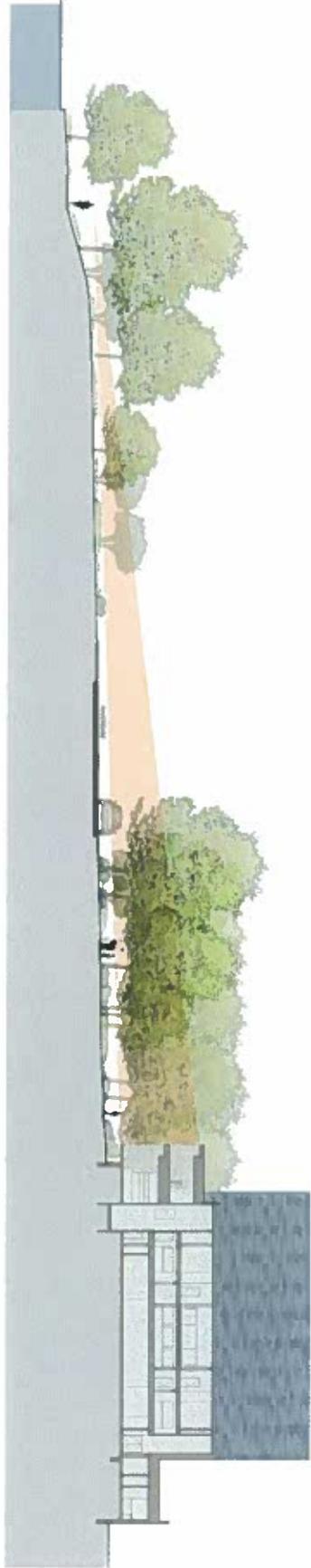
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ZACH THEATRE LANDSCAPE PLAN
Zachary Scott Theatre Center
Austin, Texas

RESOURCE DESIGN
PLANNING • URBAN DESIGN • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
3100 Harris Blvd. • Austin, Texas • 78703 • Tel: (512) 890-8078

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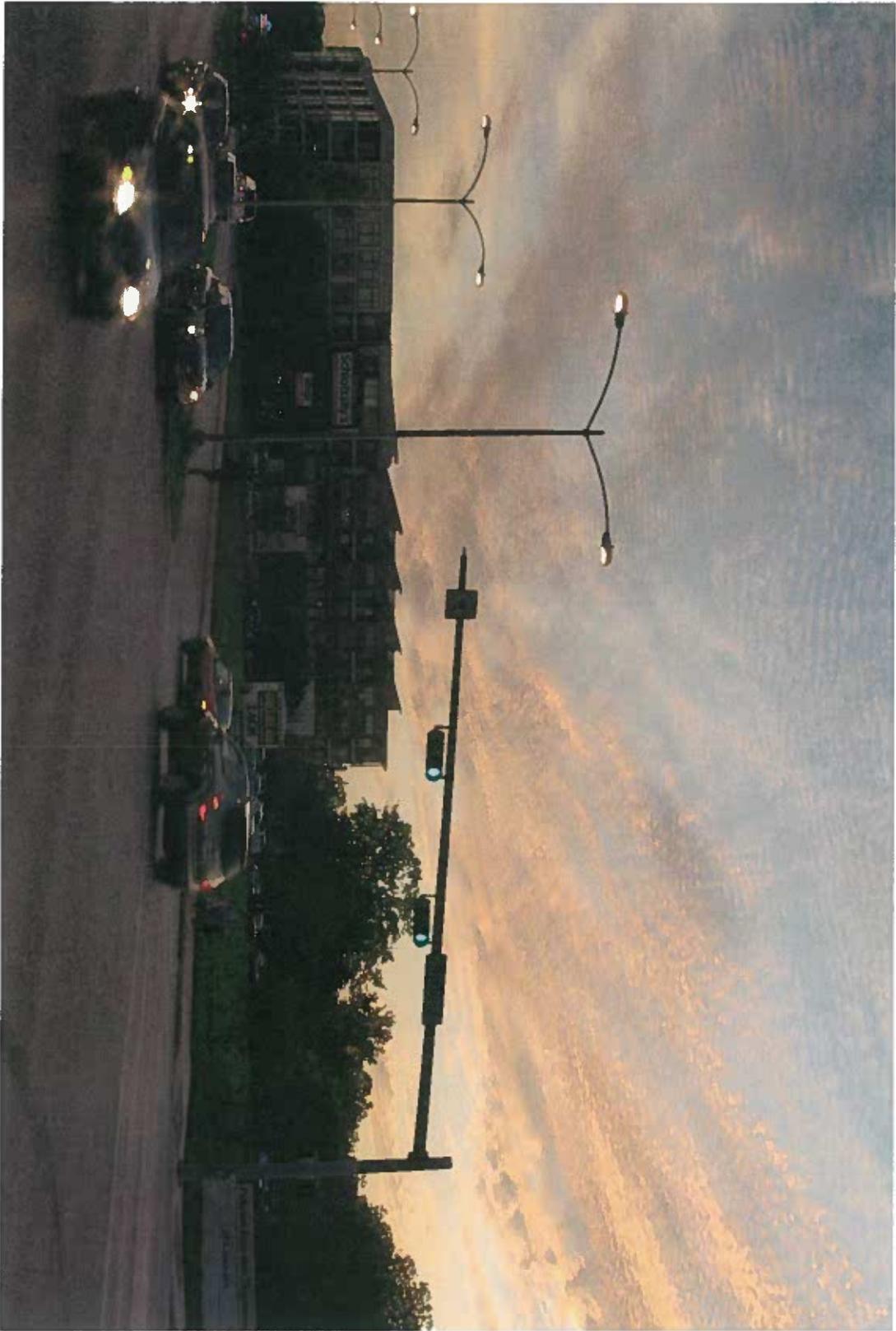


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MATERIALS



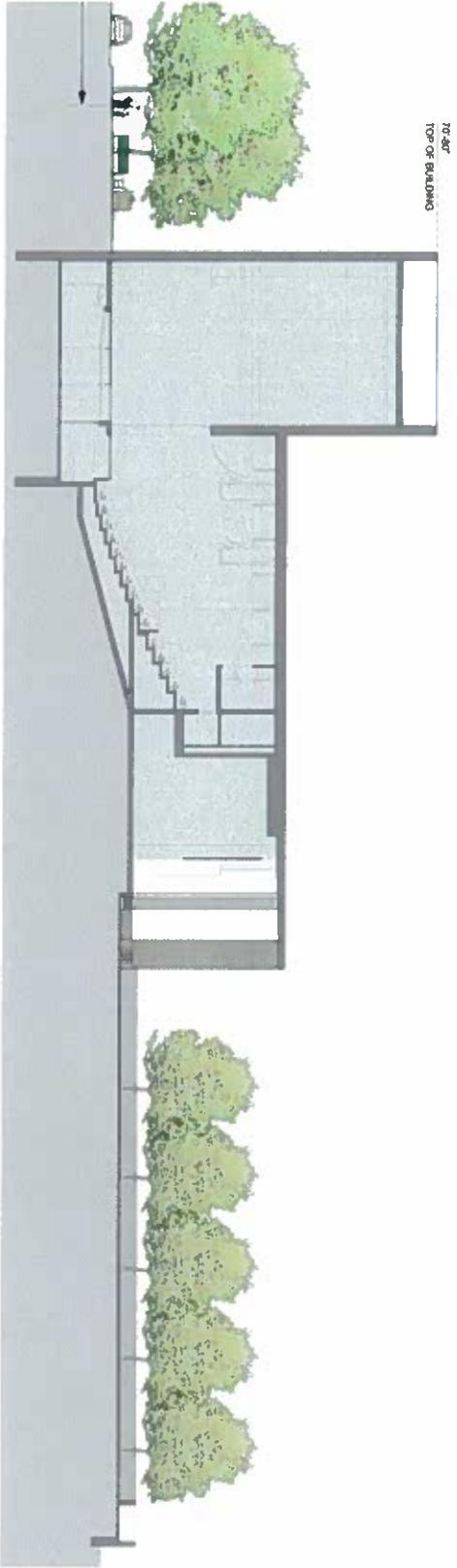
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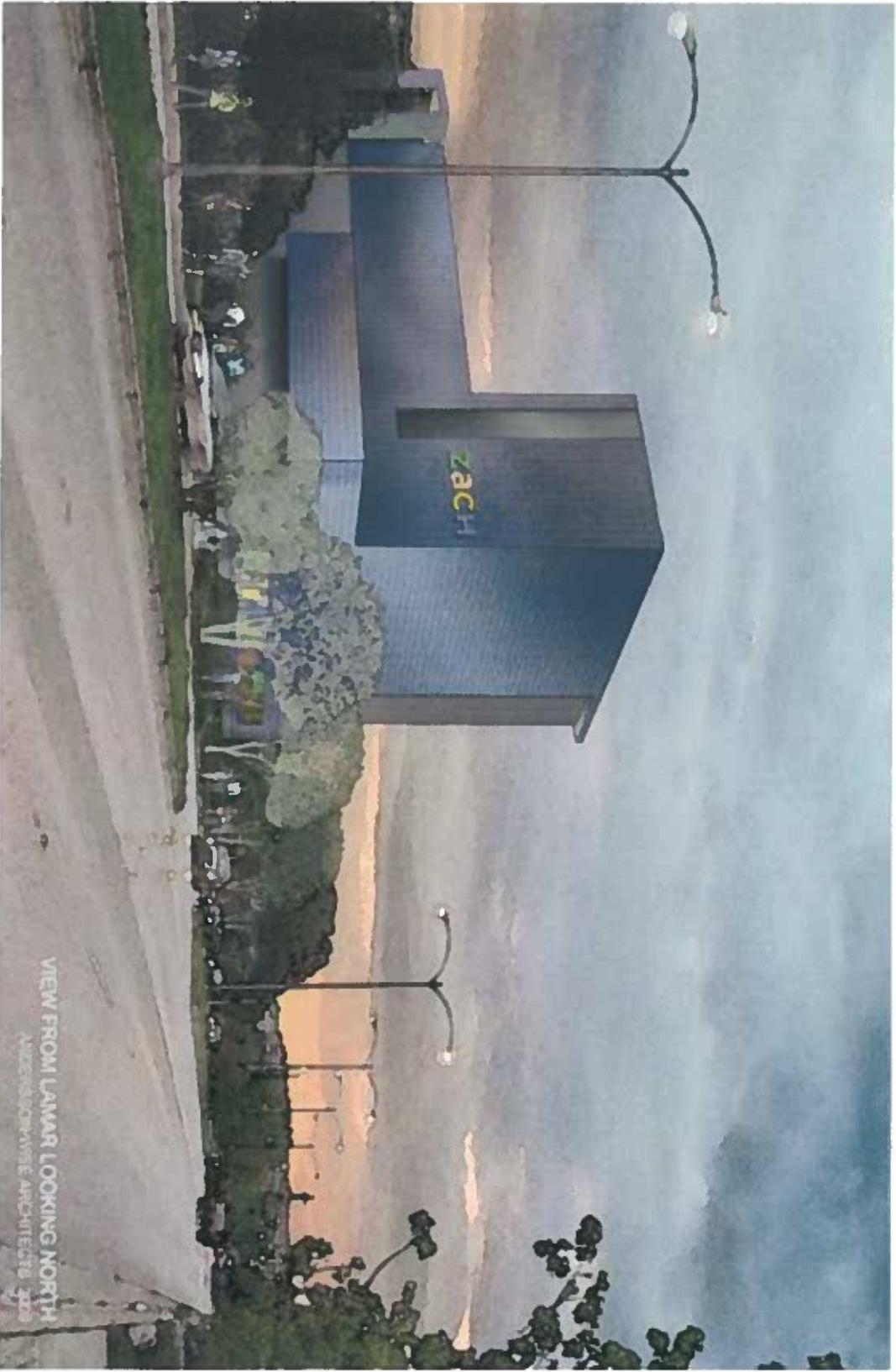
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VIEW FROM LAMAR LOOKING NORTH
ANDERSSON-SCHWABE ARCHITECTS © 2009

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LAMAR STREET PERSPECTIVE
ANDERSSON WISE ARCHITECTS
MARCH 2010

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